

MA IN COMMUNICATION STUDIES

Total Units required for the MA: 30

Program Description

A Master's degree can lead to doctoral or other professional education, or to advanced positions in business, public service, or government. The graduate program in Communication Studies is guided by two interrelated goals. First, that each student has the opportunity to study and conduct original communication research consistent with individual interests and abilities. Second, each student develops and follows a coherent, rigorous plan of study within the field of communication. Accordingly, a structured advising procedure has been established in the Department to help accomplish these two goals (see "The Graduate Document," available from the Department, for details). As an integral part of a plan of study, each student will designate a series of courses to be completed for their degree with the assistance of their advisor and the approval of the Graduate Committee. A statement outlining the logic of the chosen courses will be required and will be reviewed by the Graduate Committee. Areas of faculty expertise include (but are not limited to):

- Mediated Communication
- Organizational Communication
- Instructional Communication
- Rhetoric and Criticism
- Political Communication
- Intercultural/International Communication
- Relational Communication

As mentioned above, this program, culminating in the Master of Arts in Communication Studies, is designed for the student who subsequently will pursue a doctoral degree or a professional career. The program is **NOT** designed for students who wish to train in production or presentational skills which are taught at the undergraduate level in the Sacramento State Communication Studies Department.

Admission Requirements

Admission as a classified graduate student in Communication Studies is based on the assessment of individual credentials by the Graduate Committee, but requires at least:

- a 3.0 overall GPA or 3.25 GPA in the last 60 units completed;
- a grade of "B-" or better in a methods course such as qualitative, quantitative, or rhetorical methods. Prospective students can still apply without methods training, but may be asked to take an advanced undergraduate methods course prior to enrolling in graduate level methods.
- a clearly written statement of purpose for pursuing this particular MA degree. This statement is part of the application to the graduate program and should explain the applicant's career and academic goals, specifying how the program will help to accomplish these goals, and explaining the applicant's motivation for pursuing those goals;
- a clearly written personal statement reflecting why the applicant wishes to pursue graduate education and how they have prepared, as well as any personal contextual factors that would help the graduate committee assess the application package;

- three letters of recommendation indicating the applicant's abilities and potential for completing graduate work successfully. These letters should assess at least the student's abilities to perform well in academic courses; to conduct research independently; to express ideas well in writing and orally; and to think critically, analytically, and creatively;
- an online intake form available on the department website that includes a short Analytic Essay allowing applicants to demonstrate their ability to analyze a communication problem and craft an argument;
- at least one substantive example of writing that indicates research, analytical, and/or creative abilities;
- an earned baccalaureate degree, and
- (Optional) Graduate Record Exam (GRE) verbal, quantitative, and analytical scores.

Admission Procedures

Applicants are strongly encouraged to apply several months prior to the semester first enrollment is sought and to consult the program website (<https://www.csus.edu/college/arts-letters/communication-studies/graduate-study-communications.html>) for detailed instructions on the above materials. **All** application materials must be received before any evaluation begins. Applicants must complete a separate university application by the posted application deadline date for the term applying. *For more admissions information and application deadlines, please visit <http://www.csus.edu/gradstudies/>:*

- an online application for admission; and
- one set of official transcripts from all colleges and universities attended, *other than Sacramento State*.

A decision regarding admission will be mailed to the applicant.

Minimum Units and Grade Requirement for the Degree


Units required for the MA: 30

Minimum cumulative GPA: 3.0. No course with a grade lower than "B-" may apply towards the degree

Advancement to Candidacy

Near the completion of coursework each student must submit an Advancement to Candidacy form, with their major advisor and graduate coordinator's approval, to the Office of Graduate Studies. This procedure may begin upon satisfactory completion of the following:

- all deficiencies in admission requirements removed;
- all undergraduate course deficiencies, as noted as conditions on application response;
- the following with a grade "B-" or better;


Code	Title	Units
COMS 200A	Intro to Graduate Study--Disciplinary History and Conventions	1
COMS 200B	Intro To Graduate Studies--Paradigm and Methods (Intro to Graduate Study--Paradigm and Methods)	1
COMS 201	Communication Theory 	3
Select one of the following:		3
COMS 202	Quantitative Research Methods in Communication Studies	

COMS 203	Qualitative Research Methods in Communication Studies	
COMS 204	Rhetorical Criticism	
Total Units		8

- at least 50 percent of coursework toward the degree; and
- taken a Graduate Writing Intensive (GWI) course in their discipline within the first two semesters of coursework at California State University, Sacramento.

At least 18 units must be 200-level courses. Students may take up to 6 units of courses numbered 150-198 (excluding 195), out-of-department, or independent study (COMS 295/299) courses to complete degree requirements. However, no more than 3 units of COMS courses numbered 150-198 (excluding 195) may count toward the minimum 30-unit requirement. Additionally, students may take up to 4 variable content 1-unit modules (e.g., COMS 296A, COMS 296B, COMS 285) to count toward the minimum 30-unit requirement. By University policy, courses completed to satisfy deficiencies or admission requirements are not counted toward the MA degree.

Program Requirements

Code	Title	Units
Required Courses (8 Units)		
COMS 200A	Intro To Graduate Studies--Disciplinary History and Conventions	1
COMS 200B	Intro To Graduate Studies--Paradigm and Methods	1
COMS 201	Communication Theory 	3
Select one of the following:		3
COMS 202	Quantitative Research Methods in Communication Studies	
COMS 203	Qualitative Research Methods in Communication Studies (Qualitative Methods)	
COMS 204	Rhetorical Criticism (Rhetorical Criticism)	
Major Courses		16
		-
		19
Select 16-19 units of graduate courses ¹		
Culminating Requirement		3 -
		6
Select one of the following:		
COMS 297	Directed Study and Comprehensive Examination (Plan C: Exam) ²	
COMS 500	Culminating Experience (Plan A: Thesis, Plan B: Projects) ²	
Total Units		30

¹ Select between 16 and 19 units of graduate courses with the assistance of your advisor. Be certain these Major Courses contain a specific focus or area of concentration that can be described and explained to the Graduate Committee. Courses may be grouped into a Major and Minor area of concentration if desired. Up to six units may be taken in a related department or accomplished via independent study (COMS 295/COMS 299), with advisor and Graduate Committee approval. 3 units of COMS undergraduate courses (150-199, excluding 195) may count toward the degree, with advisor and Graduate Committee approval. Additionally, students may take up to 4 variable content 1-unit modules (e.g., COMS 296A, COMS 296B, COMS 285) to count toward the minimum 30-unit requirement.

² For students completing Plan A or B, no more than a total of 3 units of COMS 295 or COMS 299 may be applied to the 30-unit MA requirement. For students completing Plan C, this limit is increased to 6 units. Graduate Committee approval is required in the semester prior to enrollment for these units.